THE PULPIT

A SUNDAY SERMON BY THE REV. IRA W. HENDERSON, THE FAMOUS DIVINE.

Subject: Prayer.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—Preaching at the Irving Square Presbyterian Church, Hamburg avenue and Weirfield street, the Rev. I. W. Henderson, pastor, said:

We shall take as our theme for the morning "Prayer." We shall take as our text that which is found in the fifth Psalm and the third verse, "Evening and morning and at noon, will I pray."

The most distinctive superiority which we have is the ability to pray. For prayer is that which brings us into relationship with God, exclusively. Upon those we worship and pray to we look down as upon the Most High. By the exercise of our capacity for prayer we are carried into the sacred place of deity and abide without question within the shadow of the Almighty.

For prayer is communion with God. To pray is to talk to God. To pray is to converse with God. Humanity can converse with that which is not transcendental, or verbally spiritual, as that which we call prayer. For prayer lifts a man out of himself, out of his environments, out of that which is eternal and heavenly. Prayer takes a man out of himself, into the eternal and the heavenly. Prayer takes a man out of himself, forgets the land about him and enters into a new atmosphere and sees such visions and hears such things as belong to the life to be. Prayer is such, who can pray with intensity and fire. The trouble with much of our worship, prayer is that we are self-conscious. We do not pray about, we are devoid of those essential spiritual experiences that are necessary to the enhancing and enlivening of prayer. Many men seem to think that prayer offers an opportunity to exhort the congregation to better living. It does seem to us that there is no medium through which counsel and advice may be given to the Most High does not seem to be appropriate. Prayer is, in the limited sense of the term, an address. Prayer is the heartfelt communion of the soul with God. Prayer is the response of needs for power upon careful understanding and investigation of the exhaustive resources of the divine nature. Prayer is the response of the human life is affluent. The richer the experience the more fervent the prayer.

Prayer should be faithful. It should believe. Without trust in God it is a mockery. Without faith it is a farce. Prayer is not a mere wish. It is heard, that it is something more than a reflex action. And it is. At it is the most powerful energy in the universe. It is the response under proper and definite conditions, the surest. The prayer of a good man availeth. The sincere prayer of a righteous man from the humble heart is heard. The cry of the afflicted has a ready access to the heart of God. Prayer is heavenly mind over an earthly mind. Prayer is the heart of God.

Such prayer should be in the interests of the church. For a prayerless church is a church dissatisfied and discredited. It is no fiction that the prayer meeting is the spiritual thermometer of the church. Where the church has prayer, with fervency and trust the church has prevailed. When she has consented to pray without fervency and trust the church has had power with men. The trouble with us is that we lack the spirit of prayer. Judging from the average prayer meeting in the average church little for which they are thankful little need of the sustaining of God little that is to offer, little of confession. This is the most conspicuous characteristic of the church of our times. We are weak in the knees and feeble in our prayers. We are lacking in power and in influence.

When the church begins to have a consciousness of her responsibility and obligation to the world for which Jesus lived and died, when she has a clear conception of her great commission, when she feels the gracious God who has called her into being and who hath preserved her to the present day has also been a prayerless church, when the cry of the soul for God who sitteth between the cherubim cries to her soul, "Who shall I send and who will go for us?" when she has experienced these things there will be a congregation that will pray with men and not with God. For when Christians possess the knowledge of these things then they feel the need for prayer and have the power to commune with God. Then they pray.

The future of the church rests upon her capacity and power to pray. We cannot too much emphasize the need of a proper mystical and spiritual union between the Lord and His people. The danger is in the loss of spirituality and under the compulsions of the engrossing cares of the modern world we shall cease to pray. Under these pressures we shall fail to commune with God that are meat and drink and life eternal to the church of the living God. It is necessary that we shall have a clear conception of the reality as of the value of the prayer life. For prayer will panoply the church with power. It will build her personality. It will give her character. It will make her mighty against principalities and powers and against the rulers of the darkness of this world. It will make her steadfast in the hot fight against the iniquities of life and loyal in the service of the Christ for King.

The prayer of the church should be, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The Feet of the Church.

A foolish man once said: "The feet of the church (missionaries) are the feet of the church, and wherever you go the church goes with you." "Oh," I said, "that is beautiful! The feet of the church: that is the lowest part of the body, and threads in the mud very often, and in the dust. And if the feet of the Messengers of Peace are so very beautiful in the sight of God and of the angels, what must be the body? and the head? The body is so beautiful and so glorious, that must be the head!"—Pandita Ramabai Collard, of the Zambesi.

The Hardest to Bear.

It is the unrest of a divided purpose, the ache of an unsatisfied conscience, the uneasiness of a self-seeking spirit, that are so hard to bear, not the troubles that He sends, not the displeasures which He imposes upon us. Yes! we can escape from ourselves into God; otherwise there is no refuge for us.—Charles Beard.

Held Responsible.

God holds us responsible for our nature plus our nurture, for ourselves plus our possibilities.—M. D. Babcock.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR NOV. 3 BY THE REV. I. W. HENDERSON.

Subject: The Cities of Refuge, Joshua 20:1-9—Golden Text, Ps. 62:7—Memory Verses, 2, 3—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

The cities of refuge illustrate and enforce upon our minds the sanctity of human life. That is their largest open meaning. By analogy they may be found in them a type of the safety that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ for the sinful soul. The first lesson is quite obvious. The second is so only as we consider it as the part that Jesus plays in the life of the man whose sin is released from the bondage of the guilt of death and vitalized by the Spirit to possess whom is eternal life. The lesson illustrates the value and the importance of human life.

Whoever would become acquainted with God will find God coming more than half way to meet him.

One of the best evidences of your acquaintance with God will be the desire to make every one else acquainted with Him.

There is no way to be sure of anything except by the aid of the word. Many small deeds are larger ones. He who is faithful in little is faithful also in much. Many small deeds are larger ones. He who is faithful in little is faithful also in much. Many small deeds are larger ones. He who is faithful in little is faithful also in much.

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